

A PRELIMINARY CHECKLIST OF MARINE FISHES OF RED MERCURY ISLAND, NORTH-EASTERN NEW ZEALAND.

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SUMMARY

A checklist of marine fishes observed by diving at Red Mercury Island in August, 1971 is presented. Because of the small number of dives made, no abundance scale is given, and the list is certainly incomplete but contains nearly all the common species. Most of the fishes listed are warm water species, reflecting the general sub-tropical influence on the north eastern New Zealand marine fauna.

INTRODUCTION

During the Auckland University Field Club Scientific Camp in August 1971, about 10 dives were made using either SCUBA or snorkelling techniques, off the western and southern shores of Red Mercury Island and off Mokomoko Rock, a rocky islet half a mile west of Red Mercury. Because of the small number of dives, no attempts have been made here either to classify the habitats occupied by the various species or to indicate relative abundance of the fishes. Fish species known to be present in the waters around the Mercury Islands, but not seen on the present series of dives (for example some of the big game fishes of the area) have not been included in the list. A number of tripterygiids, either undescribed or whose identification was uncertain, have also been omitted. The systematic list follows the pattern of Russell (1971).

LIST OF FISHES

Family Myliobatidae

Myliobatus tenuicaudatus Hector Eagle ray

Family Ophichthyidae

Leptognathus novaezelandiae (Hector) Snake eel

Family Muraenidae

Gymnothorax prasinus (Richardson) Yellow moray eel

Family Hemirhamphidae

Reporhamphus ihi (Phillips) Piper

Family Mugilidae

Aldrichetta forsteri (Cuvier and Valenciennes) Yelloweye mullet

Family Serranidae

Ellerkeldia huntii (Hector) Half-banded sea perch

Caesioperca lepidoptera (Bloch and Schneider) Butterfly perch

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Family Carangidae

<i>Caranx lutescens</i> (Richardson)	Trevally
<i>Decapterus koheru</i> (Hector)	Koheru
<i>Seriola grandis</i> Castelnau	Kingfish

Family Arripidae

<i>Arripis trutta</i> (Bloch and Schneider)	Kahawai
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Family Mullidae

<i>Upeneichthys porosus</i> (Cuvier and Valenciennes)	Red mullet
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Family Sparidae

<i>Chrysophrys auratus</i> (Bloch and Schneider)	Snapper
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Family Kyphosidae

<i>Kyphosus sydneyanus</i> (Gunther)	Drummer
<i>Girella tricuspidata</i> (Quoy and Gaimard)	Parore
<i>Scorpius aequipinnis</i> Richardson	Blue maomao

Family Pempheridae

<i>Pempheris adspersa</i> Griffin	Bigeye
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Family Aplodactylidae

<i>Aplodactylus arctidens</i> Richardson	Marblefish
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Family Cheilodactylidae

<i>Cheilodactylus spectabilis</i> Hutton	Red moki
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Family Chironemidae

<i>Chironemus marmoratus</i> Gunther	Hiwihiwi
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Family Latridae

<i>Latridopsis ciliaris</i> (Bloch and Schneider)	Blue moki
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Family Pomacentridae

<i>Parma microlepis</i> Gunther	Black angelfish
<i>Chromis dispilus</i> Griffin	Demoiselle

Family Odaciidae

<i>Coridodax pullus</i> (Bloch and Schneider)	Butterfish
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Family Labridae

<i>Pseudolabrus celidotus</i> (Bloch and Schneider)	Paketi
<i>Pseudolabrus fucicola</i> (Richardson)	Banded parrotfish
<i>Pseudolabrus luculentus</i> (Richardson)	Orange parrotfish
<i>Coris sandageri</i> (Hector)	Sandager's parrotfish
<i>Verreo oxycephalus</i> (Bleeker)	Red pigfish

Family Mugiloididae

<i>Parapercis colias</i> (Bloch and Schneider)	Blue cod
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Family Tripterygiidae

<i>Tripterygion bucknilli</i> Griffin	
<i>Tripterygion varium</i> Bloch and Schneider	

Family Blenniidae*Blennius laticlavus* Griffin**Family Scorpaenidae***Scorpaena cardinalis* Richardson

Grandfather hapuku

Family Gobiesocidae*Trachelochismus pinnulatus* Bloch and
SchneiderClingfish
(shore collection only)**Family Aleuteridae***Navodon convexirostris* (Gunther)

Leatherjacket

A small undescribed tripterygiid should be noted because of its extreme abundance, both in shallow water, usually under slight overhangs, and in schools over weed beds in deeper water. This fish is approximately 5 cm long, and of a golden yellow hue with a prominent broad black stripe along each side of the body.

DISCUSSION

Thirty-six species from 25 families are included in this preliminary checklist, though future observations will no doubt extend it considerably.

Most of the fishes are warm water species, and many belong to families which have several representatives in tropical waters, although the tropical and sub-tropical element of the fish fauna, which is very prominent at the Poor Knights Islands (Russell, 1971), is less conspicuous at Red Mercury.

Several of the species represented, notably from the family Labridae, in New Zealand are typically found only on the northern offshore islands and parts of the coast bathed in clean water of oceanic origin, thus reflecting the clean water environment of Red Mercury Island.

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REFERENCES

- Russell, B.C. 1971 A preliminary annotated checklist of fishes of the Poor Knights Islands.
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